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464 (iv) *Persians* go to the Baku oil-fields as tub-cleaners,
167 &c.

(v) Induced by the demand for labour on railway construction and other public works, a considerable number of *Italians* immigrated into Transcaucasia about the middle of last century, and remained there in scattered communities. There is also a small seasonal immigration of Italians, chiefly masons, road-makers, and sculptors, which increases whenever new public works are taken in hand.

(vi) A few *Greeks* enter Caucasia, mainly to work in the copper mines.

(vii) There are a few villages inhabited by *German* immigrants of long standing, representing, as in Hungary, early German efforts at colonization.

167 There has been no *emigration* worth mention since the beginning of the present century, except that in 1910 a number of Turkish Armenians returned to their native country, hoping that the Young Turk revolution would secure better political conditions for their race.

(*b*) *Labour Conditions*

466 Since the revolutionary disturbances at Baku in 1902–5 (see above, p. 29) the conditions of labour in the Caucasus have steadily improved, in spite of the difficulties placed in the way of labour organization
468 by the diversity of nationalities involved. There have been frequent strikes. In 1913 manganese miners, case and can factory hands, copper miners at Dzansul, dock labourers at Poti, and the employees of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company struck for shorter hours, increased pay, and better housing. These movements met with varying degrees of success; an average advance of 30 per cent. in the rate of wages was effected and an eight-hours day was generally conceded. In May 1914 there was a general strike on the Baku fields, the demands including recognition of workmen's committees, better conditions both in the workshops and in the workers'

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Labour Conditions: Recent Socialist Legislation.—Previous to the Revolution the economic conditions of the working classes in the Caucasus had left much to be desired. During the first decade of the present century the organisation of unions and their subsequent action had caused the employers, particularly foreign, to concede a number of amelioratory measures, such as the construction of model houses, schools, public libraries, baths and hospitals. The conditions of living on the petroleum fields was less satisfactory than those of the mining-regions, and it was at Baku that the labouring classes were most unsettled. In the summer of 1914 some very significant strikes took place. The demands of the men included better housing, improvement of sanitary conditions of dwellings, a month's holiday each year on full pay, the abolition of overtime and piece-work, etc., etc. It was difficult to foresee to what results the strikes would have led had they continued. At the beginning of war, however, the strikes suddenly came to an end by the men resuming work.

On the outbreak of the Russian Revolution Baku proved to be one of the centres of industrial extremism, and when the Bolsheviks seized power in the autumn of 1917 a Soviet administration was established in the oil-fields which endured until the middle of 1918. With the Turkish occupation the conservative oil-magnates were restored to power, and, basing their policy on the principles of Turan and Islam, they were successful in obtaining the support of the Tatar workmen against their Armenian and Russian fellows. The differences between the Mussulman and Christian elements continued to divide the proletariat of the oil-fields, and the hostility of the Armenian and Russian workmen towards the Tatar Government was one of the factors favourable to the re-establishment of a Russian Bolshevist régime.

In Georgia, where the industrial element was weaker, the tendency towards extremism was less marked. The Social Democrats indeed had to base their policy on the support of the peasants who, secure in the possession of their land, evinced little sympathy for any other principles of social evolution. A series of regulations establishing workmen's committees to participate in the management of concerns, regulating wages in accordance with the cost of living, guaranteeing security of employment and imposing State arbitration in the case of disputes, were the only modifications of the former industrial organisation which the Social Democratic Government introduced. This moderation in industrial legislation, combined

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with the repression of national minorities, tended to form among the Russian and Armenian workmen in Tiflis and Batum a Bolshevist minority.

The only result of the Revolution which appears likely to be permanent are the measures which expropriated the landowners and gave possession of the land to the peasants.

This agrarian revolution was effected by a decree of the Transcaucasian Commissariat (December 16, 1917) which alienated from the original landowners all property over a certain fixed average (about 19 acres of land under intensive culture, vines, tobacco, cotton, etc.; about 41 acres of land under cereals; about 109 acres of pasturage) and appointed local commissions to supervise the division of the land confiscated among those holding less than the scheduled acreage, and among the majority who had hitherto been employed on the land only as paid labourers. In Georgia this agrarian revolution was carried out almost without bloodshed, for whilst many of the largest landowners were Russian Grand Dukes and officers absent from the Caucasus or impotent to protest, the native aristocracy wisely gave their approval to the measure.

In the Tatar districts the change was by no means recognised, and in many parts the begs, supported by the influence of the mullahs, succeeded in maintaining their position.

Conclusion.—The economic and social future of the Caucasus is necessarily involved in that of Russia, and the Soviet system of government is being introduced into the Caucasus, in conformity with that of Russia. It is consequently impossible to give here any present financial or commercial details of permanent value. Two points are, however, evident. Firstly, if the industries of the Caucasus—petroleum and manganese—are to be revived, and if its natural resources—copper, timber, water-power and agriculture—are to be developed, such modifications must of necessity be introduced into the social and industrial organisation as will afford to foreign capital some confidence of security of tenure and of amicable relations with labour. Lastly, the development of relations between the Soviet bureaucracy and the peasantry—who in the Caucasus, as in Russia, form the overwhelming majority of the population—must be considered. The peasantry certainly would not hesitate to resist any attempt to modify the terms of their tenure of the land, and the Bolsheviks will scarcely be prepared to risk an issue with them. It remains to be seen whether the efficiency of the young Jewish agri-